MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
SANTA MARIA CITY COUNCIL

VETERANS' MEMORIAL CENTER, 313 W. TUNNELL
SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA

MARCH 30, 2017

INVOCATION:
Pastor Greg Burtnett of Grace Baptist Church gave the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:
Councilmember Cordero led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER:
In Mayor Patino's absence, Mayor Pro Tem Boysen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:
MEMBERS PRESENT
Councilmembers Boysen, Cordero, Moats, and Waterfield

MEMBERS ABSENT
Mayor Patino

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT
City Manager Haydon, City Attorney Trujillo, Director of Community Development Ng, Assistant City Attorney Sinco, Deputy City Manager Stilwell, and Chief Deputy City Clerk Garietz.

Demographer Dr. Justin Levitt.

Translation provided by CAD Technician Jose Hernandez and resident Carlos Escobedo.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.
There were no requests to speak.

COMPOSITION OF DISTRICTS FOR DISTRICT ELECTIONS. The City Council considered public input pursuant to California Elections Code §10010 regarding the composition of districts for district-based elections prior to drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed boundaries of the districts.

City Manager Haydon explained that the public testimony taken during the meeting would be received by the demographer to help create the boundaries of a district map. He invited the public to view map submissions received to date on the City's website (www.cityofsantamaria.org). Mr. Haydon reminded attendees that the purpose of the meeting was not to discuss whether one was for or opposed to district elections. He stated the City was moving forward with district-based elections, and that the discussion would center on the composition of the districts, educating the public, and engaging residents in the process.

Director of Community Development Ng stated that the next Planning Commission agenda for the meeting of April 5th would include a recommendation from the Planning Commission that the Commission Chair submit a letter to the City Council and the demographer related to the inclusion of the Downtown area into each of the final districts.

Demographer, Dr. Justin Levitt, explained that Santa Maria was in the process of moving from an at-large elections system to a by-district system which would divide the City into four (or possibly more) areas. The Mayor's seat could remain an at-large position or rotate, depending on the outcome of the public hearings. In general, transitioning to district elections would allow a group of voters to successfully elect someone who might not otherwise win an at-large election. The California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) was passed in 2001, and signed into law in 2002 by Governor Gray Davis. Since that time, many California cities, water, school, and special districts have switched from at-large elections to district elections. One of the biggest driving factors behind the change has been the cost to cities facing lawsuits. The CVRA makes it easier for plaintiffs to win voting discrimination lawsuits. The Federal Voting Rights Act (FVRA) requires an "intent to discriminate." The CVRA does not have that requirement and plaintiffs are winning their cases every time. Last year, AB350 was passed - a law that requires two public hearings prior to the drafting of any district maps. Based upon information garnered from the hearings, the demographer will draft maps based on the public's input, and are expected to be available for viewing in mid-April, prior to the next public hearing which is scheduled for April 20th. Following the release of the draft maps, three public hearings will be held. The first district elections, for two City Council seats, will take place in 2018. And, following that, in 2020.

The districts are to be equal in population according to the 2010 census. These populations take into account everyone in the district including those under the age of 18 and those who are not registered to vote. When creating districts, demographers take into account growth in the last ten

years, major roads boundaries, keeping certain communities together, protected-class groups, natural or man-made boundaries, contiguousness, communities of interest (school attendance areas, natural borders, parks or other landmarks) and shared demographic characteristics such as income, language, or education levels. Districts must stay within 10 percent of "equal" to each other in population numbers.

According to the 2010 Census, the total population of the City is approximately 99,000. Therefore, if divided into four quadrants, each district would have about 25,000 residents. For the FVRA, the eligible voter population is used because the City is 70 percent Latino by total population, but 50 percent Latino by citizen voting age population. The Latino population in Santa Maria is particularly focused in the center and northeast parts of the City. Asian-Americans and African-Americans are considered to be protected classes, but do not have concentrated populations in the City. Other maps being considered by the demographer could break down the populations of renters versus home owners. This characteristic often divides areas that are more transient from those that are more permanent.

Mr. Levitt closed his remarks by stating that the characteristics he had presented were no substitute for community feedback, and that was the reason for the public hearings. He also let everyone know that the presentation he had just given was available on the City's website.

Written Communications
Chief Deputy City Clerk Garietz indicated staff had received 13 written communications regarding proposed district boundaries.

Correspondence was received from Robert Dickerson who expressed his preference to retain an at-large elected Mayor. He also suggested that each voting district have a part in the Downtown Specific Plan. Hunter and Carla Jameson also preferred retaining an at-large elected Mayor. Elizabeth Schneider suggested supporting the CAUSE map submission with the exception of Hancock Park to be in the northeast district, and also preferred at-large elected Mayor. Robert Scott wrote in suggesting the Council reconsider its decision to transition to district-based elections and that they place the matter on the ballot to be voted on. An email was received from the Santa Barbara County Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters, Renee Bischof, requesting that consideration be given to aligning the Council district lines with some of the County's existing district and precinct boundaries to minimize the impact on voters.

Two map submissions were received from Robert Dickerson and George Enriquez. Logan Anderson of the Santa Maria Times provided emails of map submissions he received from Hector Sanchez, Hazel Davalos of CAUSE, and David Baskett, all of which were published in the Santa Maria Times on Sunday, March 26th.

All of the map submissions received to date suggested four (4) voting districts.

Copies of the map submissions, emails, and correspondence were submitted to the Demographer as they were received, and uploaded to the City's website.

Public Hearing
Mayor Pro Tem Boysen opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m.

Bob Orach stated he believed the City could do something similar to the City of Santa Barbara, with six Councilmembers and a Mayor at-large and set time limits for a person to live in a particular district before they could run for election.

Kathleen Sharum expressed interest in having the boundary of Broadway and Main be the dividing points.

David Dennis spoke of the most prominent intersection of Broadway and Main saying that intersection was the most natural and historic heart of the City and formed four natural districts. He said he felt this split would encompass all of the Downtown, as well.

Connie Ford, a resident in the northeast part of Santa Maria, agreed with the quadrants of Broadway and Main. She expressed some concern around the borders of the northeast part of town, including the agricultural environment and spraying of pesticides, freeway trucks, and general noise pollution from heavy industry and traffic congestion from Highway 101. She commented that nice features shared by residents in that part of town were the riverbed, walking trails, and nearby parks.

Laura Sexty spoke against district-based elections.

Virginia Souza, of Buena Vista Beautifiers, stated she was opposed David Baskett's map submission because the border drawn down Stowell would exclude Adams School from the Buena Vista neighborhood. She requested that the demographer be sensitive to school and neighborhood parks as communities of interest when creating maps.

Renee Bishof, Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Barbara Elections Office, requested that already established precincts be taken into consideration when creating district maps. County Precincts are drawn up with each census and take into consideration Supervisorial Districts, State Senate and State Assembly make-up. She asked that special district and school district boundaries be considered so as to minimize multiple ballots to voters and thereby minimizing confusion to poll workers who distribute the ballots at polling places.

Sara Macdonald stated she believed the division for districts should be Main and Broadway and she supported four districts and an at-large Mayor's seat.
Elena Richardsen, representing the Fund for Santa Barbara, commented that her organization has supported CAUSE and thanked the Council for going forward with district elections.

Mary Jacka spoke in favor of four districts and an at-large Mayor seat. She described her northwest neighborhood and said the area is getting a better reputation than it has had in the past and that it offers great parks. She said she looked forward to four districts and fair representation.

Feliciano Aguilar from the southeast quadrant of the City agreed the division points should be Main and Broadway. He also stated he did not believe anyone's residential address should influence the districts.

Councilmember Waterfield left the meeting due to illness at 6:22 p.m.

Raymond Segura from the southeast section of town, spoke of the historic homes in his area and the diversity of home owners versus renters and commercial/industrial make-up of the area. He agreed the districts should be quadrants divided at Broadway and Main. He also said that, with change comes opportunity, and he looked forward to the opportunities that would present themselves.

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt, President of the Santa Maria/Lompoc NAACP, said she had lived in three areas of the City. She said Merrill Gardens was across the street from her home and blocked her view of the mountains. She said she did not object to this because it was important to residents of the City to have the facility. She requested that the demographer provide interactive maps for residents to use. She also asked that no gerrymandering take place during the process.

George Enriquez spoke on the map he had submitted and encouraged the demographer to use it.

Jenny Rude said she had lived in the northwest and southeast parts of the City. She commented that she supported the division at Main/Broadway.

Patricia Solario spoke in support of the map submitted by CAUSE saying she believed Broadway and Main were the appropriate dividing lines.

Janet Cruz spoke in support of four districts using the Main/Broadway intersection. She also spoke about concern for her part of town (the northwest) area being largely farm workers and renters facing language barriers and economic challenges.

Abraham Melendez also expressed interest in having the four districts be determined using the Main and Broadway boundaries. He said the southwest would need to focus on Area 9 and residential homes. He also commented that he thought the south border to the district should fall on Betteravia. He recommended that no matter how many districts were created, at least half be a voting Latino population to avoid issues in the future.

Joana Barrera stated she lived in the southwest area of the City and agreed with dividing the City quadrants at Main and Broadway.

Jen Zornow stated she had lived in all four proposed districts of the City. She agreed that Main and Broadway would be appropriate natural boundaries for districts.

Hazel Davalos, representing CAUSE, agreed that the Main/Broadway intersection would create good districts. She also stressed the importance of having at least half of the districts be representative of the Latino population. And she requested that historic neighborhoods in the southwest part of town remain together.

Jessie Funes thanked the Council for their support of City residents and spoke in support of the four proposed districts with the division at Main and Broadway.

Gale McNeeley thanked the Council for holding meetings in each area of the City. He spoke in favor of the four districts, but also said he believed the City could be divided into five districts with a rotating Mayor and that that situation might better meet the needs of an expanding population. He recommended going to Hancock College and the local high schools for input from students and community youth.

Gloria Soto spoke in support of district elections saying she lived in the southwest area of the City. She also said she believed the dividing point for quadrants was Main and Broadway.

Sara Galindo spoke in favor of the map CAUSE had submitted dividing the City at Main and Broadway. She also spoke about the pesticide drift and new development taking place in the southwest area of the City.

Viviana Saavedra spoke in favor of the split at Main and Broadway and her excitement about the fact that the City is transitioning to district elections.

Danny Mogg stated he lived in the northeast part of town. He spoke in favor of Broadway and Main being the dividing line for districts. He also requested that the transition be as open and transparent as possible for the residents of the City.

Hector Sanchez thanked the Council for supporting district elections, quoted Abraham Lincoln and then asked that the process adhere to the Federal Voting Rights Act, particularly Section 2, which focuses on communities of interest.

Jane Baxter, a resident in the northeast part of the City, spoke in favor of five districts with a rotating Mayor.

Judy Burch expressed concern over crime in Santa Maria and said she felt district elections might help diminish crime in the City. She said she believed four to six districts would be good and the dividing line should be Main and Broadway.

Ken Hough, representing SBCAN, stated their Board of Directors had expressed interest in four districts with the division at Main and Broadway. He also suggested the City provide opportunities for residents to meet with the demographer to create their maps. He also said he would support the idea of six districts with a rotating Mayor.

Jeanne Sparks spoke in favor of five to seven districts, with a rotating Mayor taking into consideration term limits. She also suggested the demographer be available to the public to assist with the creation of maps.

Mayor Pro Tem Boysen closed the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Council Discussion

Councilmember Moats commented that he believed the four most popular quadrants proposed during the evening had huge disparities between them. He stated he believed the northwest part of town had higher densities with more families with younger children and, possibly, lower numbers of registered voters. He asked if the demographer had had a chance to investigate any of those issues.

Demographer Levitt responded that he would be exploring the demography of each quadrant early on in the process, and that sometimes, demographics could be surprising and not the expected outcome. He also agreed with the comment that one quadrant might have many more registered voters than another.

Councilmember Cordero commented that the Police Department had divided its sections of town at Cook Street and Broadway back when he worked with the department. He said he agreed with the comments that Main and Broadway would be a good splitting point for districts, but he found it

difficult to believe that the division there would meet all the criteria of districting. He added he was surprised at the small turnout in the audience given the City's total population.

Mr. Levitt clarified that populations between districts needed to be within ten percent of each other. Frequently, not everyone gets everything they expect from the process, but he said he was confident there would be room to adjust a little, too.

Mayor Pro Tem Boysen summarized that Broadway and Main did seem to be the natural dividing points for quadrants in the City. He said he thought that four to five districts was all that was needed now and, perhaps in the future as the city grew, more districts might be beneficial. He asked if it would be possible to offer interactive maps to the public along with population maps.

Demographer Levitt responded that there were interactive maps available to the City should staff ask to use them. He added that he could provide four district and five district maps for people to view. He said a port would also be available to provide a web view where people could go in and put in their address to see where they would fall in the districts.

REPORT BY CITY MANAGER
City Manager Haydon noted that the next meeting regarding district elections would be Thursday, April 20th at 6:00 p.m. at the Edwards Gymnasium, 809 Panther Drive. The next regular Council Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 4th at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers and would include the Community Development Block Grants annual allocations for public services and capital projects.

ADJOURNMENT:
There being no further business to come before the City Council at this time, Mayor Pro Tem Boysen declared the meeting of the City Council adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

APPROVED:

April 18, 2017
Date

Rhonda M. Garietz
Chief Deputy City Clerk of the City of Santa Maria and ex officio Clerk of the City Council

Jack Boysen
Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Santa Maria

ATTEST:

Rhonda M. Garietz, CMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk